



Public Participation Plan

**Rogers Brothers Seed cleanup
308 E. 3rd St., Colfax, Whitman County**

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Eastern Region Office
Spokane, Washington

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Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Rogers Brothers Seed cleanup site page](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/RogersBrosSeed).¹

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 17434
- Facility site ID: 59563493

Contact Information

[Toxics Cleanup Program](#)²

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Language Access

The Department of Ecology offers free translation and interpretation services. If you need help in your preferred language, please call Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 and request an interpreter, or email Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

¹ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/RogersBrosSeed>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Toxics-Cleanup>

Department of Ecology's Region Offices

Map of Counties Served



Southwest Region
360-407-6300

Northwest Region
206-594-0000

Central Region
509-575-2490

Eastern Region
509-329-3400

Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Across Washington	PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

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Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this Public Participation Plan in collaboration with the Port of Whitman County, the party responsible for cleanup costs. The goal of this plan is to ensure meaningful community involvement throughout the cleanup of Rogers Brothers Seed (site). A site map is in Appendix A.

This plan outlines how Ecology will keep the public informed about contamination investigations and cleanup options at each stage of the process. Please review page 9 and Appendix B for more information about the cleanup process. The plan also details when and how the community can participate in the cleanup process. We encourage the public to engage with the decision-making opportunities and provide input.

Site contacts

To be included in the site record, comments about the cleanup process must be submitted during comment periods. Questions and informal comments or information about the site's history are welcome anytime.

Ecology

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kara@portwhitman.com
509-288-0179

Regan Meyer, communications director
regan@portwhitman.com
509-610-2982

If you are unable to reach these contacts, please visit the [cleanup site page](https://go.ecology.wa.gov/RogersBrosSeed)³ for up-to-date contact information.

³ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/RogersBrosSeed>

Public Participation Activities

Members of the public may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. Interested parties do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact Ecology or the Port.

However, to be included in the formal site record, comments about the site investigation, cleanup alternatives, or cleanups must be submitted during formal comment periods. In addition, the public is invited to review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in decision-making about the cleanup.

How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the cleanup, Ecology will mail notices about public comment periods to addresses surrounding the site. The mailing list area will vary depending on the type of contamination and where it's located. However, the list will at least include addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals. These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if not yet scheduled.

Comment period notices will be available online and at document repositories (for example at the library closest to the site). Notices may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for example, local businesses, schools, or post offices).

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the site's status. These informational documents will be available online, and print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Postal mailing list

Ecology maintains a mailing list that includes addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and relevant local, state, and federal government contacts, if email addresses aren't available.

People on the mailing list receive public comment notices when draft documents are available.

We will add individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list as requested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).⁴ To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),⁵ or contact Sarah Kellington at sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

Newspaper display ads or legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events for this site in ads or notices published in the *Whitman County Gazette*. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).⁶

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a [webpage for the Rogers Brothers Seed site](#).⁷ The website provides site information, and you may download cleanup documents.

We may also share information about cleanup sites through [news releases, our blog, and social media](#).⁸

The Port's website and social media platforms

The Port maintains a [webpage for the Rogers Brothers site](#).⁹ The website provides site information and project updates.

The Port also shares information about the project through [news releases](#)¹⁰ and our [social media](#).¹¹

Automatic site updates

You can subscribe to this site from our [Rogers Brothers Seed webpage](#). You'll receive a weekly email if we change the site's status, add documents to the site's webpage, or open a comment period.

Places to see print documents

Washington Department of Ecology
Eastern Regional Office
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/site-register>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

⁷ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/RogersBrosSeed>

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/news>

⁹ <https://www.portwhitman.com/projects/rogersbrothersproperty>

¹⁰ <https://www.portwhitman.com/press-releases>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/portofwhitmancounty>

To schedule an appointment, please contact Miriam Robbins at 509-329-3415 or Miriam.Robbins@ecy.wa.gov.

If you would like to be mailed print documents, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

Signs around the cleanup site

We may also install signs displaying information about project status, traffic impacts, and health risks around the cleanup site.

How you can share information with us

We hold public comment periods and sometimes public events to learn your thoughts, opinions, and concerns about cleanup at a site. We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

Public comment periods

At a minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 9 for more information) requires 30-day comment periods to allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, Ecology may extend the public comment period.

When Ecology oversees State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determinations (see page 9 for more information), we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other cleanup documents are concurrently available for review.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, the documents will become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings based on community interest. At meetings, workshops, and open houses, attendees can ask questions, learn more about the site, and submit written comments when a comment period is open. At a public hearing, verbal comments are transcribed for the record, and Ecology responds to them after the comment period in our response to comments.

If we have not scheduled an event, we will hold one if 10 people request it. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the event occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public events are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

Public Participation Grants

Grants may be available to neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site. For contaminated sites, these funds can be used to:

- Hire an expert to help interpret technical information
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process

For more information about Public Participation Grants, please contact Laura Busby at 360-280-5088 or laura.busby@ecy.wa.gov and Maria Marlin at 360-407-6083 or maria.marlin@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the [Public Participation Grant webpage](#).¹²

Site Information

Past uses

Union Pacific Railroad stored coal at the site from 1908 to 1912. From the 1940s to 1980, Rogers Brothers Seed Company processed and stored pea seeds there. From 1994 until the Port bought the property in 2026, Juaul, Inc. stored cars, boats, and other items at the site.

The property has four buildings:

- The Rogers Brothers office and processing building
- Storage building
- Two sheds

A railroad spur runs between the processing and storage buildings. A site map is in Appendix A.

How the site became contaminated

Pesticides were mixed with water and applied to pea seeds. Until 1979, a conveyor chute dumped the leftover mixture of diluted pesticides and water on the ground outside the pea processing building. Then, a new system was installed that carried the leftover pesticide-water mixture in an underground pipe to an underground storage tank outside the storage building.

Records show the rock under the railroad tracks at the site may be mine tailings from Idaho's Silver Valley, which would contain metals.

¹² <https://ecology.wa.gov/PPG>

Contamination

Due to past railroad use, pea processing, and vehicle storage, soil and groundwater are contaminated with:

- Pesticides
- Lead
- Diesel and gasoline

As buildings are torn down, materials may be hazardous, including asbestos and lead-based paint. Demolition began in July 2026.

Investigations and cleanup

In the 1990s, Rogers Brothers hired an environmental consultant to remove the underground storage tank and connected pipe, which were leaking. Workers dug up contaminated soil from around the tank and pipe and disposed of it at an appropriate facility. Soil samples were taken from the excavated area, and pesticides remained at levels requiring cleanup.

After Ecology reviewed the report about the work, we requested groundwater samples be taken. Workers installed monitoring wells and took groundwater samples from them. Pesticides were in groundwater at levels requiring cleanup.

Through 1997, more soil and groundwater investigations were done, but cleanup wasn't finished.

The Port was considering purchasing the property for redevelopment, and in 2025, hired another environmental consultant to further investigate soil and groundwater. These investigations confirmed contamination remained at levels requiring cleanup. The consultant wrote a [report](#)¹³ documenting the investigation findings and evaluating ways to clean up the site. They recommended excavating and moving contaminated soil that isn't hazardous waste to one spot on the property. This soil would be buried in a lined hole about 4 feet deep and covered with more protective liner and then clean soil. Contaminated soil that is hazardous waste would be taken to an incinerator. This work is estimated to cost \$5 million.

Funding and redevelopment

The Port used funds from a \$500,000 EPA grant to complete the investigations and cleanup options analysis. In 2026, they received another [\\$4-million EPA grant](#)¹⁴ for completing the

¹³ https://portwhitman-web.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/files/2026_0115_HAI_POW_ABCA-RBSC_D1.pdf, Draft *Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives*, Haley & Aldrich, 2026.

¹⁴ <https://www.portwhitman.com/press-releases/port-of-whitman-county-awarded-epa-cleanup-grant>

cleanup. They plan to redevelop the property for the community's benefit. The Port is pursuing [engineering and design for a childcare facility](#)¹⁵ to potentially be constructed on the site.

Area community

Colfax is the seat of Whitman County with the second-largest population of 2,708 (2024). The largest is in nearby Pullman, where Washington State University is located. The city is Y-shaped, following the confluence of the north and south forks of the Palouse River and State Route 26 and U.S. Highway 195, which becomes the city's main street. The site is in the northeast arm of the Y, behind the Colfax Junior-Senior High School and athletic complex (Figure 1, page 8). The river flows in between the school and the highway. The neighborhood south of the site is a mix of commercial and residential, while to the north is all public use, including the school complex, Colfax City Pool and Skatepark, Schmuck Park, and the Palouse River Scenic Trail and Drive.

The community is largely based on agriculture, with the city being surrounded by farms. In 2024, the median property value was \$245,300, and the homeownership rate was 65%. The 2024 poverty rate was 15.1%, and the median income was \$61,914 with 1,084 people being employed. (Information from Data USA.)

As of the 2020 census, the median age was 44.8 years. 18.7% of residents were under 18 and 23.6% of residents were 65 or older. Women slightly outnumbered men. 24% of the 1,305 households had children, and 18.7% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. 90.4% of people were white, 5.6% two or more races, and 4% Hispanic or Latino.

Ecology will reach out to cultural community organizations as part of our outreach and provide information in other languages according to federal guidance.¹⁶ The non-English language most widely spoken in the Colfax area is Spanish. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Spanish. To request information in another language, call Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290, and wait on the line while we connect an interpreter.

We strive to make our public participation efforts as inclusive as possible and welcome your input about how to best reach the nearby community.

Tribal engagement

The site is within the usual and accustomed areas of the Nez Perce Tribe, Spokane Tribe, Umatilla Confederated Tribes, and Yakama Nation. The cleanup process may uncover cultural resources. We will reach out to Tribes to offer opportunities to engage in the cleanup process

¹⁵ <https://www.portwhitman.com/press-releases/port-of-whitman-county-awarded-grant-for-design-and-engineering-of-potential-childcare-center>

¹⁶ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2004/06/25/04-14464/guidance-to-environmental-protection-agency-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi>

that are separate from the public involvement process. This engagement is described in a site-specific Tribal Engagement Plan. We invite Tribal members and other indigenous peoples to engage in the public involvement process as well.



Figure 1. The Rogers Brothers Seed site is in northeast Colfax, behind the junior-senior high school.

Washington's Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the [Model Toxics Control Act \(MTCA\)](#)¹⁷ and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. Passed in 1989, MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington state. This law sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects people and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this plan.

Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began in 1988 as a citizen-led effort to clean up contaminated sites in Washington state. The law holds property owners or operators responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property.

Ecology carries out MTCA, making sure cleanups happen according to state rules and regulations. These rules are found in [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#).¹⁸ Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and the property is placed on the [Contaminated Sites List](#)¹⁹ if the pollution is determined to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. This starts the cleanup process at the site.

The cleanup process under MTCA includes several steps (Appendix B). Public involvement is a key part of MTCA's [cleanup process](#).²⁰ Nearby residents, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties can review and comment on documents related to steps that make crucial decisions or plans about the cleanup.

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#).²¹ Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment along with cleanup documents.

Plan Amendments

Ecology developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

¹⁷ <https://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca>

¹⁸ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

¹⁹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated>

²⁰ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process>

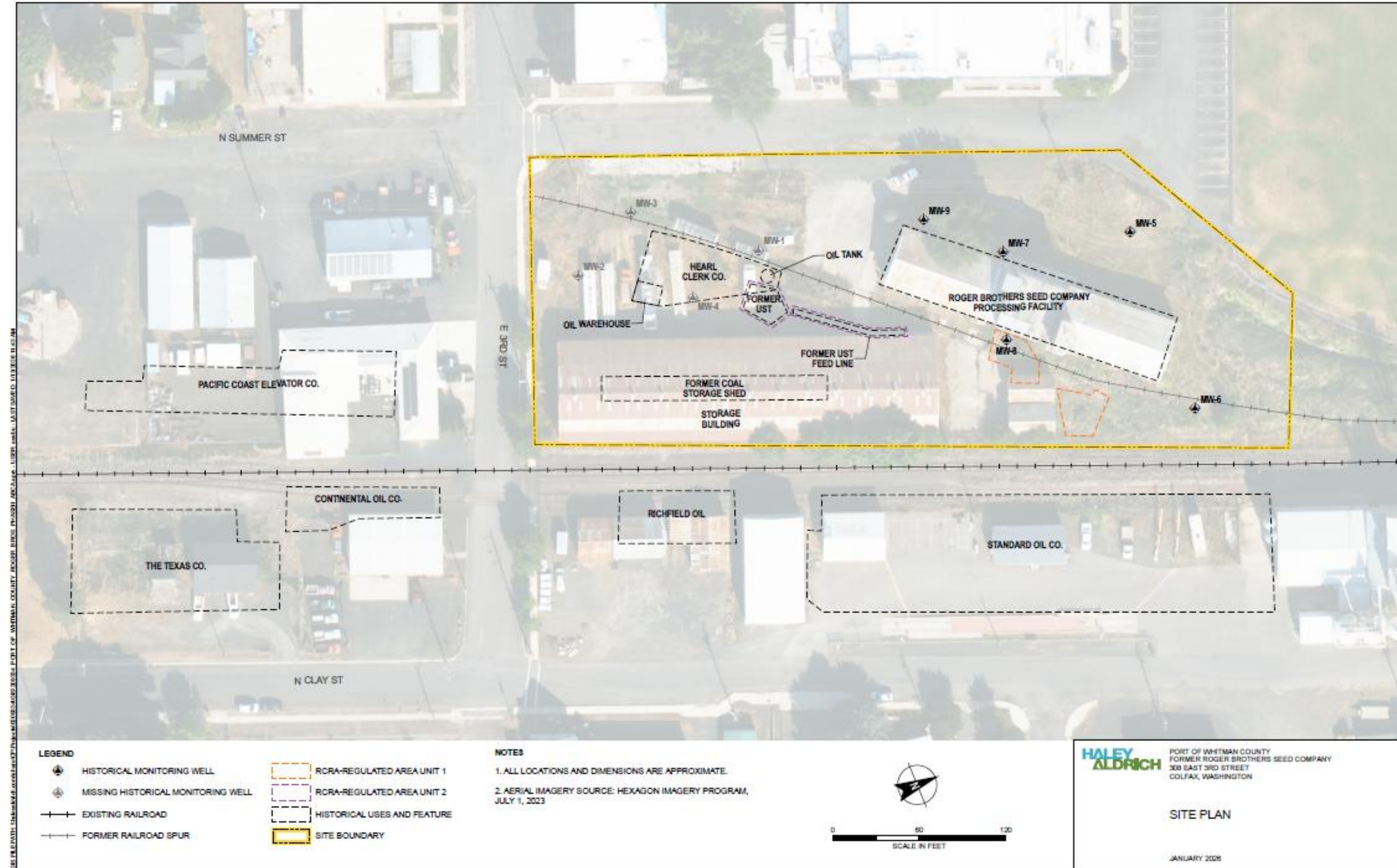
²¹ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

We intend this plan to provide information about opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed reflect our current plans to keep the public informed. It also provides ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms in this plan are insufficient or would like to modify them in some way, please contact us. We will work to find solutions. We can implement new activities or outreach tools right away, with or without amending this plan or holding a public comment period.

Appendix A

Rogers Brothers Seed site map (Haley & Aldrich, 2026)



Appendix B

Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law. See the accessible PDF on the next page for details.

The PDF full-page graphic is navigable and readable by screen-readers. All visible text is properly structured, with headings. The icons, arrows, and stairs are individual images with their own alt-text.

Note: “Public input opportunity” and the associated comment bubble icon are intentionally artifacted. Do **not** add them back into the tags.

To include the full-page graphic in the PPP, you need to combine them at the PDF stage to retain all the accessibility features.

1. This is your ‘placeholder’ page where you want the graphic in Word.
2. The figure label on this page is needed for the table of contents, so don’t delete it. This will include the graphic in that list.
3. Complete the rest of your document normally and export it to PDF.
4. Download the full-page graphic from Biblio.
5. Before you do other accessibility work in Acrobat, open the **Page thumbnails** pane.
6. Click the drop-down arrow in the upper left and choose **Insert Pages** then **From File...**
7. Navigate to where you saved the full-page graphic PDF and select it.
8. Select **Page** and enter the page number of your placeholder page.
9. Still on the **Page thumbnails** pane, click the drop down again and select **Delete Pages...**
10. Select **Delete Pages...** from the same drop-down menu to delete the placeholder page.
11. Scroll to the table of contents.
12. Select **Edit PDF** from the Tool bar on the right.
13. Select **Link > Add/Edit Web or Document Link** from the ribbon at the top.
14. Drag the cursor to create a box around Appendix A. Steps in the MTCA cleanup process in the table of contents.
15. In the dialog box under Link Action, select **Go to page view**. Click **Next**.
16. Scroll to the top of the Appendix A page and click **Set Link** in the dialog box.

The graphic should be in the right place, with tag structure intact. This page won’t have a header or footer, and that’s fine.

